

Esher Church School



Complaints Policy

July 2023

Reviewed on:	July 2023
Reviewed by:	Full Governing Body
Review Cycle:	3 years
Next review date:	July 2026

Rationale:

Esher Church School endeavours to provide the best education possible for all of its pupils in an open and transparent environment. We welcome any feedback that we receive from parents, pupils and third parties, and we accept that not all of this will be positive. Where concerns are raised the school intends for these to be dealt with:

- Fairly
- Openly
- Promptly
- Without Prejudice

In order to do so, the Governing Body of Esher Church School has approved the following procedure which explains what you should do if you have any concerns about the school. All members of staff will be familiar with the procedure and will be able to assist you.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Esher Church School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, you will be referred to an appropriate alternative staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, you will be referred to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Esher Church School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern can be raised in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the person with the concern, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, Phase Leader, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

All concerns will be dealt with confidentially, although the staff member may need to take notes if they feel that the matter may need to be taken further or it may arise again in the future. Any such notes will be kept in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. However, such notes would be able to be used to as evidence if further investigation was required, or if the concern became a formal complaint.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint, using the Complaint form (Appendix B). If you require assistance with completing the form, please contact the school office.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at a later stage of the procedure.

A template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure, for use at any stage of the procedure as required. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation such as the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Timescales for raising a complaint

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Audio or video evidence

Complainants should make sure they obtain informed consent from all parties present before recording conversations or meetings. In line with DfE guidance, we do not normally accept electronic recordings as evidence when we are asked to consider a complaint. Unless exceptional circumstances apply, we will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded.

Social Media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, Esher Church School requests the complainants do not discuss complaints publicly or via social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

Deviation from the procedure

There may be occasions when it's necessary or reasonable to deviate from the published complaints procedure. In these cases, the complainant will be kept informed and reasons for the deviation given.

Scope of this complaints procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Esher Church School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions to schools 	<p>Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the local authority.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Surrey Children’s Single Point of Access (C-SPA) on 0300 470 9100.</p> <p>If at any time a child protection concern becomes apparent, the Safeguarding Policy takes precedence over the complaints process, which will be halted until the child protection matter is resolved. Wherever a complaint indicates that a child’s wellbeing or safety is at risk, the school is under a duty to report this immediately to the local authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which can be found on the school website.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school’s complaints procedure.</i></p> <p>https://www.esherchurchschool.co.uk/policies/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 	<p>Refer to the Surrey Local Offer website (www.surreysendlo.co.uk) or contact the Local Authority where you live.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school’s complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school’s internal grievance procedures.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>If at any formal stage of the complaint it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary in order to resolve the issue, the details of this action will remain confidential to the Headteacher and the individual's line manager.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against Esher Church School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Esher Church School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained about will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

In addition, mediation can provide a helpful mechanism for discussion when a complaint is raised, and can help to rebuild the relationship between parties once all of the investigative stages of the complaints procedure have been complete.

Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Concerns and informal complaints

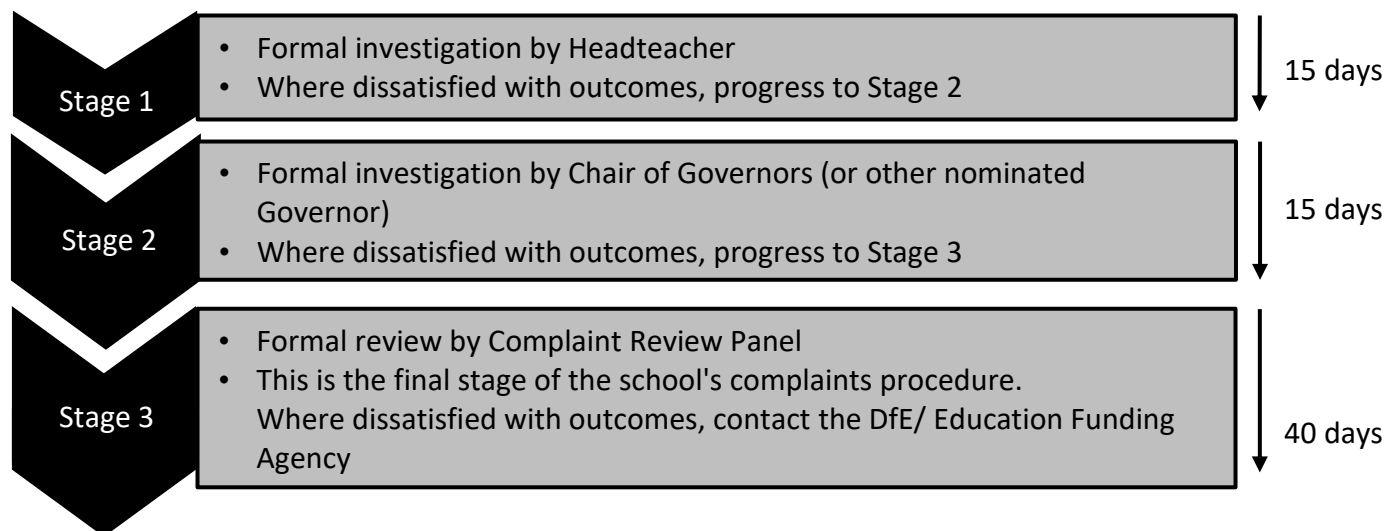
It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis, within 10 school working days.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, Phase Leader, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher. Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at a later stage of the procedure.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Timeline for formal complaints

All timescales in this document refer to school working days i.e. excluding weekends, school holidays, Inset days etc.



Timeframes

Esher Church School will endeavour to abide by timeframes stated under each stage. However in some circumstances this is not always possible due to the complexity of information needed to review a complaint, difficulties regarding an individual's availability to deal with the complaint, or because of issues that are outside of the school's control. If it becomes apparent that it is not possible to complete any stage of the complaints procedure within a given timeframe, the individual responsible for handling the complaint will contact the complainant as soon as possible and come to an agreed timeframe that works for all parties involved.

Esher Church School reserves the right **not** to investigate complaints that have been made three months after the subject of the complaint took place, except in exceptional circumstances. What is meant by exceptional circumstances is where new evidence has come to light, where the complaint is of an especially serious matter or where there is reasonable justification for why the complainant has been unable to raise the complaint before this time. In such circumstances the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors will review the situation and decide whether or not to enact the complaints procedure, informing the Chair of Governors of the decision where the decision has been made by the Headteacher.

Who should I approach at the informal stage of a complaint?

Educational matters:

Pastoral care:

Disciplinary matters:

Financial/Administration matters:

Complaint about a staff member's conduct:

Your child's class teacher/s

Your child's class teacher/s

Your child's class teacher/s

School Business Manager

Direct approach to the staff member themselves, or where this is thought inappropriate/does not resolve the situation, their line manager should be approached.

Complaints about the Headteacher or the governors

Where a complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complainant should first directly approach the Headteacher in an attempt to resolve the issue informally. If the complainant is not satisfied with this outcome, or if they have good reason to feel it is inappropriate to approach the Headteacher in the first instance, they should notify the Clerk to the Governing Body (see contact details at the end of the document). The Stage 2 process (in line with the process outlined on page 8) will then commence.

Where a complaint concerns a governor the complainant should contact the Clerk to the Governing Body. Informal resolution will be sought, but where this fails, the complaints procedure at Stage 2 will take immediate effect with the Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor undertaking the investigation. Where a complaint concerns the Chair of Governors, the investigation will be carried out by the Vice Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor.

In exceptional circumstances the Governing Body may appoint an independent investigator to look into the concerns.

If the complaint is not resolved then the complainant should write to the Clerk to the Governing Body, requesting that the complaint is considered by the Complaint Review Panel (in line with the process outlined on page 10).

Formal stages of the complaint procedure

Stage 1 - Investigation by the Headteacher

If it has not been possible to reach a resolution at the informal stage, the complainant may progress to the formal complaint procedure. In doing so, the following steps will be followed:

1. Complainant contacts the Headteacher.
2. The complainant must explain in writing:
 - Details of the complaint
 - Action taken so far and solutions offered
 - Why the complaint remains unresolved
 - What action they would like to be taken resolve the problem.
3. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged. It is likely that the complainant will be invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the matter.
4. At the meeting the concerns will be discussed and resolution will be sought. If agreement can be reached at that point on a way forward which is satisfactory to all parties, this will be confirmed in writing following the meeting. If the issues are not resolved by the end of the meeting, the Headteacher will then commence a full investigation.
5. The Headteacher will provide the complainant with written confirmation of the outcome of their investigation within 15 days of receipt of the written complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she is able to progress to stage 2 of the complaints process.
6. The Headteacher will make and retain a record of the concern and the outcomes of the investigation.

If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions <Academy Name> will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint if they believe it has not been fully addressed at this stage.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

the complaint will move to Stage 2 and will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response to the complainant with a copy to the Headteacher.

Stage 2 - Investigation by the Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor

1. The complainant should submit a Stage 2 complaint form to the Chair of Governors (see Appendix B for the contact details of the Chair of Governors, and Appendix D for a copy of the form). The form is important as it ensures that relevant information is communicated at the outset.
2. The Chair of Governors may choose to delegate the investigation of the complaint to a Nominated Governor.
3. Receipt of the complaint form will be acknowledged. In most cases the complainant will be invited to meet with the Chair of Governors/ Nominated Governor at the outset of the process.
4. The Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor will consider all relevant evidence; this may include but is not limited to:
 - evidence and outcome from Stage 1 investigation if applicable
 - a statement from the complainant
 - where relevant a meeting with/statement from an individual who is the subject of the complaint
 - any previous correspondence regarding the complaint
 - any supporting documents from all parties
 - interviews with /statements from anyone related to the complaint
5. After considering the available evidence, the Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor may:
 - uphold the complaint and direct that certain action be taken to resolve it
 - not uphold the complaint and provide the complainant with details of the Stage 3 complaint review process
 - uphold the complaint in part: in other words, the Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor may find one aspect of the complaint to be valid, but not another aspect. They may direct for certain action to be taken to resolve the aspect that they find in favour of the complainant.
6. The Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor should inform the complainant of their decision in writing within 15 days of receipt of the complaint. They should explain clearly why they have come to the decision that they made. They should detail any agreed actions as a result of the complaint. Finally, they should provide the complainant with details of how to progress the complaint to stage three if they are not satisfied, providing them with the contact details of the Clerk to the Governing Body (Appendix B). Should the complaint not be resolved mediation may be helpful. This can be arranged through the Area Schools Support Service and will be impartial and objective.
7. A log of all correspondence in relation to the complaint will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Stage 3 - Complaint Review Panel

In order to proceed to Stage 3, the complainant must complete the Stage 3 Formal Complaints Form (Appendix E), identifying the reasons why they feel that the complaint has not been fully investigated thus far, which element(s) of their complaint remain unresolved, and what outcome they are seeking from the Stage 3 Complaint Review. The complainant should inform the school if they require help with completing the form. The complainant must complete and return the form within 10 days of receiving the Chair of Governor's/Nominated Governor's decision or it will not be considered, except in exceptional circumstances.

The aim of the Complaint Review Panel meeting is to review how the school has managed the complaint, not to reinvestigate the complaint itself. This will include reviewing evidence and outcomes from Stages 1 and 2, and evaluating whether the school has followed its policies and procedures. Consideration should also be given to achieving reconciliation between the school and the complainant however, it has to be recognised that this is not always possible.

The Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel will fulfil the role of organising the time and date of the review meeting, inviting all the attendees, collating all the relevant documentation and distributing this 5 days in advance of the meeting, recording the proceedings in the form of minutes, and circulating these and the outcome of the meeting. The minutes are a summary of the discussion at the hearing and the decision of the Complaint Review Panel following the hearing, but will not include the deliberations of the panel. The minutes are the property of the Governing Body.

The following steps will be followed:

1. The Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel will write to the complainant within five days to confirm receipt of the Stage 3 form and detail further action to be taken.
2. The Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel will convene a panel of two school governors and one independent member. All three panel members will have no prior knowledge of the content of the complaint. Complainants have the right to request an independent panel, if they can demonstrate that there is likely to be bias in the proceedings otherwise. Schools should consider the request but ultimately the decision is made by governors.
3. The complaint review meeting will take place within 30 days of receipt of the request for the Stage 3 complaint review. If the first identified date is not convenient for the complainant, up to two further dates should be offered. If these all fail to be suitable or the complainant cancels the meeting at the last minute for whatever reason, then the Panel may opt to conduct the Complaint Review meeting in private, without either the school or the complainant being represented. Their considerations will be based the documentary evidence previously provided by both parties. This is to ensure that the matter is resolved as soon as possible in the best interests of all parties.
4. The Complaint Review Panel will invite the following parties, where applicable:
 - the complainant
 - the Headteacher
 - the Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor who dealt with the complaint at Stage 2
 - relevant witnesses
 - Area Schools Support Service representative (for procedural advice)

The complainant may ask to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, relative, representative or advocate. It is inadvisable for this person to be a member of the school community, for reasons of confidentiality and to avoid conflict of interest. The complainant should advise the Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel of the name and role of this supportive companion prior to the hearing, and the Clerk will seek agreement from the chair of the Panel. The supportive companion is not there as a witness, so does not address the Complaint Review Panel except with the prior agreement of the chair.

Neither party is able to bring legal representation with them.

If the attendance of any pupils is required at the hearing, parental permission will be sought if the pupil is under the age of 18. Extra care will be taken to consider the vulnerability of children where they are present at a complaints hearing.

5. The Complaint Review Panel can make the following decisions:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the governing body regarding the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

6. All parties who attended the meeting will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review within 10 days.

This is the final stage at which the school will consider the complaint. If the complainant remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the complaint further, please see the contact details on page 15. The school will not consider the complaint beyond this.

Retention

The complaint investigator/the Chair of the Complaint Review Panel should ensure that a copy of all relevant information relating to the complaint is kept at the school in a secure, confidential file, separate from staff and pupil records. This information should be retained for six years from the date of the complaint, in line with guidance from the Information and Records Management Society (www.irms.org.uk) and in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. The complainant should be informed that this will be done.

Unreasonable complaints and serial and persistent complainants

Esher Church School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Esher Church School defines serial and unreasonable complainants as '*those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints*'.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);

- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, telephone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' judgement.

If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that his/her behaviour is unreasonable and asking him/her to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Esher Church School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school site.

Barring from the school premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Governing bodies have a responsibility to ensure for the wellbeing of pupils and staff, and will therefore act to ensure that schools remain a safe place.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied permission to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. Schools should always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place. Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department of Education. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

Contact details for external organisations if not satisfied with the outcomes of the complaints procedure in full

- If you have any queries regarding any aspect of the complaints procedure, please direct these to the Clerk to the Governing Body (please see Appendix B) or the Surrey County Council Area Schools Support Service (please see Appendix A).
- If the complainant feels that the Governing Body acted unreasonably in the handling of the complaint, he/she can complain to the Education Funding Agency after the complaints procedure has been exhausted. Please note that unreasonable is used in a legal sense and means acting in a way that no reasonable school or authority would act in the same circumstances.

Education Funding Agency
Complaints
Chief Executive's Office
53-55 Butts Road
Earlsdon Park
Coventry
CV1 3BH

- Ofsted will also consider complaints about schools. Complainants can contact Ofsted if they think a school isn't run properly and needs inspecting. Ofsted will not look into problems with individual students. This course of action is only available if the school's complaints procedure has already been followed.

<https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>

Relevant legislation and guidance

The Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Data Protection Act 1998 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made>

Education Act 2002 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

The Department for Education *Best Practice advice for school complaints procedures*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures>

Appendix A

Surrey County Council Area Schools Support Service contact details

North East Surrey

(Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Spelthorne)

Caroline Marden**Area Schools Officer**

Telephone: 01372 833412

Email: caroline.marden@surreycc.gov.uk

Mariette Masters**Area Schools Assistant**

Telephone: 01372 833412

Email: mariette.masters@surreycc.gov.uk

Esher Civic Centre, High Street,
Esher, Surrey KT10 9SD

Appendix B

School contact details

Esher Church School
Milbourne Lane
Esher
Surrey
KT10 9DU

01372 463 139

office@esherchurchschool.org.uk

www.esherchurchschool.org.uk

Chair of Governors contact details

Mrs B Holmes
Chair of Governors
Esher Church School
Milbourne Lane
Esher
Surrey
KT10 9DU

ben.holmes@esherchurchschool.org.uk

Clerk to the Governing Body contact details

Mrs T. Davis
Clerk to the Governing Body
Esher Church School
Milbourne Lane
Esher
Surrey
KT10 9DU

Contact via the school office

Appendix C

Roles and responsibilities

It is expected that all those involved in a complaint are treated respectfully.

The Complainant

The complainant or person who makes the complaint will receive a more effective response to the complaint if he/she:

- co-operates with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- expresses the complaint in full as early as possible;
- responds promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- asks for assistance as needed

The complaint investigator (Headteacher or Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor)

The investigator is the person involved in Stage 1 or 2 of the procedure. The investigator's role can include:-

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved;
 - consideration of records and other relevant information;
 - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint;
 - analysing information;
- effectively liaising with the complainant to clarify what he/she feels would put things right
- responding to the complainant in plain and clear language

The investigator should make sure that they:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and are prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to do so.

The Stage 3 Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel

The Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel is the contact point for the complainant for this panel meeting and is expected to:-

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings;
- circulate the minutes of the panel hearing to the complainant, the panel, the Headteacher and the Area Schools Support Service representative (if in attendance);
- notify all parties of the panel's decision

The Stage 3 Chair of the Complaint Review Panel

The Chair of the Complaint Review Panel has a key role in ensuring that:

- the meeting is minuted;
- the procedure for the hearing is explained;
- the role of the Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel and the Area Schools Support Service representative is explained (including that they take no part in the decision-making but are there to record proceedings and provide procedural advice);
- the remit of the panel is explained to the complainant and both they and the school have the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- the hearing is conducted in a manner whereby everyone is treated with respect and courtesy;
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently;

- no member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure

Area Schools Support Service

The role of the Area Schools Support Service is to provide impartial advice and guidance to school staff, governors and complainants at all stages of the complaints process.

Appendix D

Esher Church School Formal Complaints Form (Stage 2)

Name	
Name of pupil, year group and your relationship to them (where applicable)	
Address	
Telephone (Day)	
Telephone (Mobile)	
Email Address	

Details of the complaint
Action taken so far (including staff member who has dealt with it so far) or solutions offered
The reason that this was not a satisfactory resolution for you
What action would you like to be taken to resolve the problem?

Signed:
Date:

Official use

Date received:	Signed:
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